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Mediaeval

The large Buddhist head — a recent gift from Dr. Denman W. Ross — illustrated on page 61 is probably from Bihar or Bengal and of about the tenth century. The hair is disposed in tiny curls, but the elaborate headdress and jewels show that it is some Bodhisattva and not a Buddha that is represented. By this time Indian sculpture had already begun to lose its first force and to become purely symbolic; but examples such as this show that the mediæval sculptor could still suggest the dignified presence of a spiritual being. In spite of damage it remains an impressive work, and though it is lacking in the highest plastic qualities and has more color than structure, the character of graciousness and subtlety (the Bodhisattva is a supremely conscious being whose gestures are far removed from naïvete) is admirably realized.

Another Indian sculpture, the gift of Dr. Coomaraswamy, is a gray sandstone fragment, a part of a figure of an *apsaras*, or nymph of Indra's heaven. The face is youthful, full and serene, the hair very elaborately dressed with interwoven flowers; the hands are raised above the head and clasped in a gesture significant of amorous sentiment. This head exhibits a close stylistic resemblance to a female bust of the ninth or tenth century from Mandor, published by Marshall and Sahni,* and has more distant affinities with a female head at Gwalior, published by myself in *Visvakarma* (pl. 57). The Museum example may be assigned to the tenth or eleventh century; the whole figure was probably part of the architectural decoration of a Brahmanical temple, rather than a cult object.

* Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1909-10, Pl. XLIII, Fig. 7.

A. K. C.



Design for ornament

M. Schongauer

The Handbook of the Museum*Thirteenth Edition*

THE new edition of the Handbook just issued includes for the first time a section devoted to the art of India. India has also been given its column in the "Synopsis of the history of art as represented in the Museum collections" on page 411.

The department sections into which the volume is divided are now prefaced when possible with Finding Lists showing where each object illustrated can be seen in the galleries or department rooms.

The Handbook is not a Catalogue of the Museum exhibits nor a Guide through them. The Catalogues of one and another collection, which are increasing in number year by year, list the possessions of the Museum. The Leaflet Guide directs the visitor about the building. The Handbook is intended to acquaint the reader, by illustrations and accompanying texts, with a selection of representative objects in the Museum, informing him briefly as to their place in history and adding data about the institution.

The Handbook retains the form by which it has from the first met six temptations besetting such a book: the temptation to become a history of art; the temptation to illustrate objects not mentioned in the text and mention objects not illustrated; the temptation to print illustrations and the text referring to them remote from one another; the temptation to conceal plans among fly-leaves; the temptation to begin the book with a history of the institution; and finally, the temptation to make a thick or large paged volume. It has been felt that the history of art is necessarily in part irrelevant to any given museum collections; that to illustrate objects without mentioning them or vice versa disappoints the reader's legitimate curiosity; that to separate illustrations from the verbal references to them tends to exasperate him, as does also the attempt to open to plans and printed directions when of uncertain whereabouts in the book; that the history of a museum is the last thing most visitors care or need to read; and finally, that a non-portable handbook belies its name. On these several accounts the Museum Handbook has from the first restricted general historical matter to brief introductions; with every illustration it gives a text and vice versa, and these are printed on the same page or opposite pages; the general plans of the building are on the inside of the stiff covers of the book, with directions to the visitor printed opposite; the history of the Museum is given last; and finally, in size the Handbook duplicates a Baedeker guide, approved as a handy volume by generations of travellers.

The Handbook, in its thirteenth edition, has become a volume of 450 pages, with 350 illustrations. It is now sold in paper covers at fifty cents, in cloth at one dollar. Subscribers to the Museum are entitled to receive copies on application.